



The President's Daily Brief

14 July 1970

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

The fighting in Cambodia centers around the resort town of Kirirom. (Page 1)

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The Soviets' 24th Party Congress has been postponed until March 1971. (Page 3)

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CAMBODIA

The fighting continues to center around the resort town of Kirirom, southwest of Phnom Penh. The Communists appear to hold the town itself, but two battalions of Khmer Krom reinforcements have worked their way through the dense jungle to the southwest and, according to late press reports, may have retaken some enemy positions around Kirirom.

An enemy message intercepted yesterday reported that a 600-man Communist force hit Kirirom Saturday, securing various Cambodian installations and cutting lines of communication. The intercept, sent by COSVN's strategic intelligence bureau, went on to report that "the government forces fled in confusion. The Cambodian troops were of insufficient strength to hold Kirirom."

In the only other significant action, Communist forces penetrated government defenses at the Lovek ordnance depot in Kompong Chhnang Province. Counter-attacking government troops apparently were able to push the enemy out of the depot, however. Some munitions are still stored at Lovek, but most have been moved to Phnom Penh for safekeeping.

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LAOS

Souvanna has been informed that Communist leader Souphanouvong is sending a representative to Vientiane to "examine the arrangements" for an "eventual meeting" between the "interested parties." The emissary will carry a letter from Souphanouvong, evidently in response to Souvanna's letter of late June which proposed that talks be held in Communist territory in Laos.

This initiative is probably the fruit of consultations in Hanoi involving Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Firyubin, the Polish ICC representatives, and presumably the North Vietnamese and Pathet Lao. Firyubin is now on his way home. Stories about a new Soviet peace initiative originating from his stopover in New Delhi probably relate to this more modest Laos proposal.

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USSR

A central committee plenum yesterday scheduled the long-overdue 24th Party Congress for March 1971. The plenum also announced that Brezhnev and Kosygin would give the main reports at the congress, suggesting that until then at least, Moscow does not expect top-level leadership changes.

Party leaders earlier had committed themselves to holding the congress this year, a promise Brezhnev made again as recently as 2 July. Difficulties in working out the over-all guidelines for the next five-year plan may be one of the reasons for the last-minute decision to delay the congress.

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